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Winter

HOME & GARDEN ISSUE
HOMES AWAY FROM HOME

HOT NEW
HOTELS

How To Make an Accessory
Dwelling Unit Suit You
(And Make Money Doing It)

DOWNTOWN DOGS
A Pup's Home Away
From Home



559

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OCTOBER 27-NOVEMBER 9, 2016

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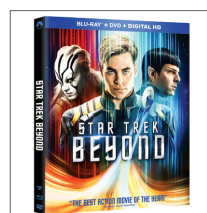
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ON THE COVER

An accessory dwelling unit is a home away from home...by a matter of feet. Read more about them in this Winter Home & Garden Issue.

Photo by Alyssa Lee Photography

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Homes Away from Home

Sometimes what I like most about my home is leaving it. This home and garden issue covers three aspects of leaving home with a theme of “Homes Away From Home,” so we’re looking at pets, hotels, and personal property as vacation rentals.

The cover story for this issue is all about this new trend of renting out personal property for vacationing people, people who need temporary housing, and people who are looking for spaces for special events. They tend to be unique and neighborhood-oriented. I’m excited to see where this trend goes. The project we show off here pleases me in a number of ways: it came about because of an article in one of our previous home and garden issues; it’s a brand new concept to the city of Minneapolis and this project was designed by the architect who quarterbacked the process of getting ADUs approved; it’s owned by a member of this community and is a concept that is particularly appealing to this community that tends to take care of (and make space for) their family members; and it’s an appealing business prospect for a community that tends to grasp entrepreneurial opportunities such as this.

Also of interest to our readership are the new hotels popping up in Minneapolis. Design-forward, food-oriented, locally sourced, the new properties are not only beautiful but also provide great opportunities for us, our travelers, and our special events. Suites, rooms, full-service, self-service, small, and large, there is plenty to choose from and our city is all the better thanks to these additions. I’ve got my eye on the pet-friendly


one for a staycation, myself.

Lastly, with pets in mind, one of the most important things I do when making travel plans is make sure my dog, Grendel, is all set. He’s almost 11 years old and the last time I boarded him, I learned that he is the proverbial old dog who can’t learn new tricks. Our usual “camp” is out in the country, about an hour away. I decided to try some place near my loft in St. Paul for a quick two-day trip and he responded by eating his foam bed the first night, he was so upset. Being fluent in his language, this told me that he’s going back to camp in the country, because that’s not only where they know him, but he knows them. It’s familiar. It’s part of his “territory.” But I still have great guilt over it. So, it was good timing for me to read the piece about Downtown Dogs in this issue in which Ralph Bernstein says, “That’s exactly why places like Downtown Dogs exist and why we all love what we do.” When we find a place that works for our pets as a home away from home, we can relax and let ourselves off the hook, knowing that they’re somewhere they’re known and wanted. Phew.

While I love to stay at unique properties and luxe hotels, what brings me home is the four-legged guy who prefers the company of me, and only me, in our four walls. May our wanderlust always find balance with what calls us to return.

With you and with thanks,

Andy ■



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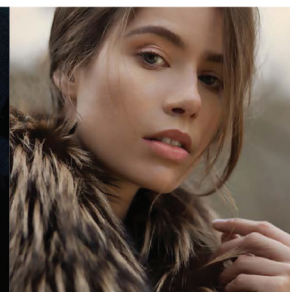
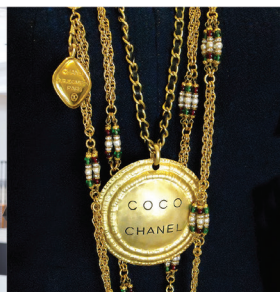
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Hold These Truths and Keep Holding

As *The Parchman Hour* plays out on the Guthrie's McGuire Proscenium Stage, a story from another troubled time unfolds upstairs in the Dowling Studio.

Hold These Truths, Jeanne Sakata's solo play with Joel de la Fuente, chronicles the journey of Gordon Hirabayashi (1918–2012) who, in 1942, resisted the internment of fellow Japanese Americans during World War II and for which he spent time in federal prison.

The play's importance resides in the fact that shortly after Hirabayashi's retirement in 1983, documents were uncovered that clearly showed evidence of government misconduct in 1942, revealing information that at that time had been withheld from the Supreme Court of the United States.

After the case was reheard by federal courts and the conviction overturned in 1987, Hirabayashi, then 69, said, "There was a time when I felt that the Constitution failed me. But with the reversal in the courts and in public statements from the government, I feel that our country has proven that the Constitution is worth upholding. The U.S. government admitted it

made a mistake. A country that can do that is a strong country. I have more faith and allegiance to the Constitution than I ever had before."

Actor de la Fuentes first played Hirabayashi in New York in 2012. Opening again in the Guthrie de la Fuente shares, "It has been an unexpected privilege to get to work on this play over several years — and an artistic gift. So often a play will close and I will immediately think, "Oh, now I get it! I wish I had another shot at that!" *Hold These Truths* has given me the opportunity to revisit and re-experience Jeanne's wonderful play several times. There is a depth to the work that can only happen when you get to live with something over time."

De la Fuentes states, "The play could not be more relevant to today's audience. Almost 75 years after the Japanese American internment, we have politicians in this country calling for the removal of other Americans based solely on their physical appearance or religious beliefs. We have citizens being all too willing to surrender their civil liberties in a climate of fear. "Gordon's struggle is our struggle. His courage and conviction should be an example for us all." ■

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Interesting Fact: I always wanted to be a gay man because I should've been born a queen.
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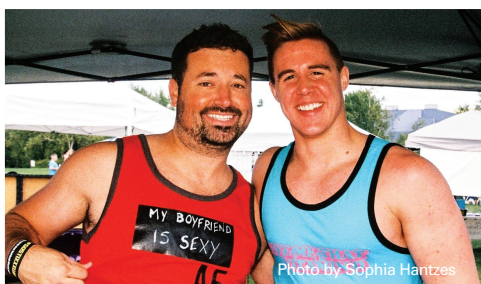
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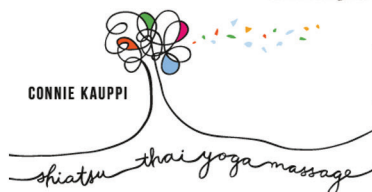


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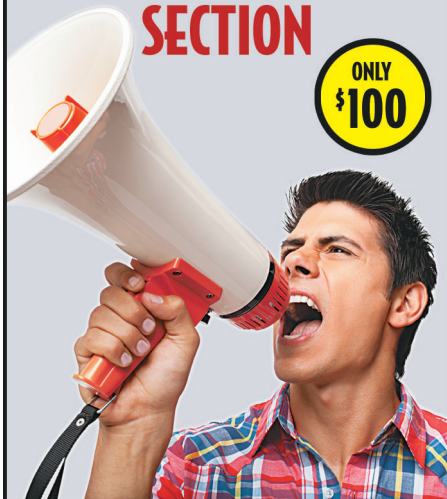
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The Rivals. Photo by Noreen K. Brandt

THE RIVALS

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Corcoran Park Players has produced the greats of play writing for several years. From Lillian Hellman to Samuel Beckett and beyond. They now present one of the great classics of world comedy, *The Rivals*, by Richard Brinsley Sheridan. Director Steven LaVigne notes, "The first performance of the play was such a disaster, so Sheridan closed it, rewrote it extensively and opened a month later. His first play, *The Rivals*, has kept people laughing since 1775. It's quite an achievement for a man who was a Conservative in the House of Commons. We've moved the play from the Restoration to the Regency period, and it works just fine. Classic British comedy always adapts well to a new setting. I think it's one of the silliest plays of all time, but it's a treat to do this play, because it's so much fun."

JITNEY

Through Nov. 6
Penumbra Theatre, 270 N Kent St., St. Paul
651-224-3180
www.penumbra theatre.org

Penumbra Theatre, the nation's flagship African American theater company, is reviving August Wilson's drama of cabs, Pittsburgh, and the struggle to survive. It's like settled science, so to speak, that Wilson (1945–2005) is the greatest American playwright of color. He developed much of his work in St. Paul, and Lou Bellamy, Penumbra founder, directed the second production

of the play in the early 1980s.

Jitney is set in the late '70s and is part of two cycles written by Wilson: The Pittsburgh Cycle, which denotes the setting of its plays, and The 20th Century Cycle of plays tracking African American experience during the decades of the last century. Bellamy directs this *Jitney* revival and he is widely

considered to be the foremost interpreter of the Wilson canon.

THE PARCHMAN HOUR

Through Nov. 6
Guthrie Theater, 818 S 2nd St.
Minneapolis
612-377-2224
www.guthrie theater.org

The Parchman Hour portrays a group of people of different races. It celebrates these idealist youths who journeyed by bus into the deep south in 1961 to protest racial segregation. Patricia McGregor has directed the Guthrie Theater production with an incisive vaudevillian style that suits playwright Mike Wiley's polemical writing style.

A gifted ensemble shines with satirical glee as they relate the bigoted attitudes experienced in their travels. These Freedom Riders endure cruelties at the Parchman Farm Prison in Mississippi, not to mention a mob mentality at points during their trip. Numerous ironic scenes work effectively despite the unwieldy script. Carl Flink's dynamic stage movement and wonderful vocals directed by Sanford Moore meld a visceral forcefulness into the whole occasion, a type of experience that one can only find in live theater.

The Parchman Hour puts forth discussion about the conflict



Jitney. Photo by Allen Weeks

between nonviolent civil disobedience and aggressive retaliatory action. But perhaps its timeliest aspect is how it addresses prison as embodying institutionalized abuse where prejudiced wardens and guards are granted free rein to vent their sadistic capacity onto those they see as lesser.

Talented live musicians enhance both the action and Tom Mays's projections; projections rich in imagery pertaining to the actual 1961 event. Indeed, *The Parchman Hour* is a striking manifestation of a time and place.

THE BAKER'S WIFE

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For millions, Stephen Schwarz is the favorite musical creator of our time. In the early 1970s he astounded with *Godspell* and *Pippin*, both of which have proved to be enduring gems. In 2003 he crafted *Wicked*, arguably the best big musical of the century so far.

However, a lesser known Schwarz work from 1976, *The Baker's Wife*, is being revived by Artistry, featuring the luminous Bradley Greenwald. The show is best known for the tune, "Meadowlark," and is said to have a cult following. The story involves a much needed baker in a small town whose wife is seduced by another man. This causes the husband to lose his will to bake, which creates a local crisis. And of course, romantic and social crises are ideal material for a musical.

THE GOOD PERSON OF SETZUAN

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Bertolt Brecht (1898–1956) hailed from Germany and looms as a playwright and theatrical innovator who feverishly questioned his social system. Frank Theatre has been the area's most accomplished producer of his work and in such a political year it comes as no surprise that Brecht is being offered. In Brecht's true Theater of Revolt spirit, the show plays at an on-site production which means that it is played in a space other than a regular theater: the vacant Rainbow Foods site at 27th and East Lake Street.

Director Wendy Knox shares, "The central character in Brecht's parable (which is a clear critique of capitalist society) is a woman who is striving to do good in a world where everything conspires against her. The play asks us how can we do good and create a world that will sustain goodness? In this election season, where rules of the game seem to have been dismantled, it seems a good time to really examine that question. As the gods in the play tell us as they are departing, 'Show interest in her goodness for no one can be good for long if goodness is not in demand.'"

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The Baker's Wife. Photo by Hilary Roberts

dance companies and their annual dance concerts are major events.

This year you can see work by choreographers Kendra Portier and Greg Dolbashian. Moreover, there is a heightened interest over someone who has developed a following locally: Dallas-based Danny Buraczeski. His acclaimed piece, *Song Awakened*, is being revived this year.

Dancer Mary Ann Bradley shares, "I am thrilled to be revisiting Danny Buraczeski's gorgeous work *Song Awakened*. It was originally created by his company JAZZDANCE! after his visit to Cuba in 2001, where he studied Cuban folk dance forms. Set to the music of Portuguese-Creole soul singer Cesaria Evora, the piece feels as if you are moving inside a sensual island fairy tale. Last January, Zenon also toured to Cuba where we were treated to many inspiring performances of traditional Cuban music and folk dance. I look forward to bringing the richness of our shared experience to this beautiful work!" ■



Zenon Dance Company's 34th Fall Season Concert. Photo by William Cameron

"Redefining Normal"

by Brent Heinze

"I have been looking for someone to date for a long time and I feel like just giving up."

"I thought online and mobile dating opportunities were supposed to help people meet, but I feel more alone and disconnected than I was before everyone was online."

"I really try not to surround myself with negative or mean people, but they seem to find me and screw up my life."

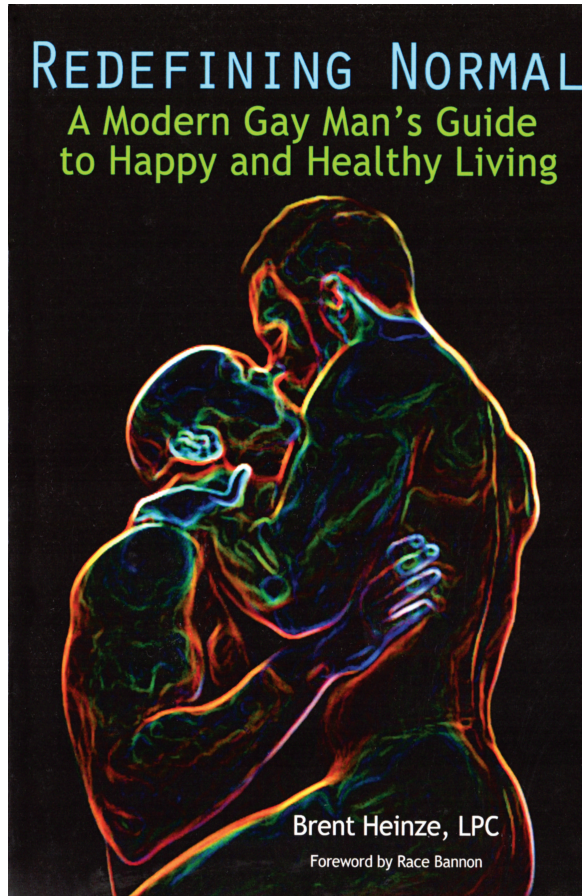
Do these comments sound familiar? Have you, or someone you know, said or thought things like the above? They are just a few of the issues dealt with in *Redefining Normal: A Modern Gay Man's Guide to Happy and Healthy Living*, a new book by Brent Heinze, LPC.

Heinze, who competed in the 2011 International Mr. Leather contest as Mr. Leather Colorado 2010, has written his "Heinzesight" column since 2011 for *OUT FRONT*, a Denver-based GLBT periodical. Heinze's book contains expanded versions of some of these columns.

Redefining Normal deals with relationships and other issues affecting the gay male community, although much of the wisdom in this book can benefit anyone, regardless of gender or orientation. Basically, Heinze wants you to live an awesome life. In the book's introduction, Heinze says he wrote these columns because he wants to "make people think about their lives, realize that they are not alone in their struggles, and enable them to take better control of their emotions, choices, and happiness." In other words, if our "normal" isn't providing us with a healthy, happy, and satisfying life, Heinze shows us that we have the power to "redefine normal" by making some changes.

Chapters in the book discuss topics including dating, navigating online cyber-social culture, developing personal social skills, negotiating both intimate and sexual relationships, dealing with addictions, and finding a fulfilling place in a satisfying community.

Throughout the book, Heinze mixes three



types of writing: commentary, questions and answers, and lists. Heinze's lists shine with a disarming wit. Lists in the book include "Top 10 bad gay habits," "Mom's advice for hooking up," "Mom's advice for having a successful relationship," and sarcastic tips on how to "develop your inner douchebag." It's amazing how much concentrated thought-provoking wisdom Heinze can pack into each selection on his various lists.

In the question-and-answer segments, Heinze answers questions mostly with positive, upbeat, uplifting, and hopeful answers. However, he is appropriately critical and minces no words when faced with situations involving dishonesty and a lack of personal integrity, such as a gay but heterosexually married man who is living a double life. Heinze's response:

it is just a matter of time before the man's double life will be discovered, and no good will come of the discovery. "Grow a pair," advises Heinze, "and either figure out how to improve your relationship [with your wife] or end it. It is not fair to your partner to keep [...] things from her."

Brent Heinze onstage at the 2011 International Mr. Leather contest. Photo by Steve Lenius.

As a licensed professional counselor, Heinze is well qualified to write this book. But in addition to his professional counseling knowledge, Heinze brings to the book a writing voice and style that make the book easy to read and very much a reflection of his personality: big-hearted, enthusiastic, and sometimes a little sarcastic and twisted (in a good way). *Redefining Normal* is further strengthened by Heinze's inclusion of moments, stories, and lessons from his own life.

In the chapter on community, Heinze writes eloquently about the value of mentoring for people who are gay, kinky, or both, and how the AIDS epidemic caused a breakdown of the community's mentoring system. He suggests a return to mentoring as a way of creating a stronger community made up of empowered individuals. With this

book, Heinze has made a valuable contribution to mentoring others in his community. ■

Redefining Normal: A Modern Gay Man's Guide to Happy and Healthy Living by Brent Heinze, LPC (foreword by Race Bannon). Published by Brent Heinze. \$14.95 at Amazon.com.



Brent Heinze onstage at the 2011 International Mr. Leather contest. Photo by Steve Lenius.

OUR AFFAIRS

BOOKS | BY E.B. BOATNER

In the Darkroom

Susan Faludi
Metropolitan Books
\$32

Faludi's story begins in 2004 when she is alerted by her 76-year-old father, long estranged and living in Hungary, that he has gone to Thailand and become Stefanie. "Write my story," she challenges. Would that it were that simple. Armed with tape recorder and batteries, it's not — it never was with Stefanie — a matter of asking questions and getting answers: "I'm a Hungaaaarian, I know how to faaaake things." Forays into Hungarian history, István's life as a young Jew hiding as a Nazi during the war, and their own past in America swirl around the reader who tries to comprehend Stefanie, as does Faludi, who confesses, "I was preparing an indictment, amassing discovery for a trial. But somewhere along the line, the prosecutor became a witness."

Forgotten Spirits

Barbara Deese
North Star Press
\$14.95

The past returns for one of the *No Ordinary Women* book club members, inexorably engulfing the others. In Deese's third mystery, Foxy, always more reticent about sharing her story than the other four, turns out to have a doozy of a back story: former Las Vegas dancer, an ex-husband, witness to a murder, and (once but no longer) a hold-all full of cash, the latter of which has now caused the death of an old friend and sent a murderer after her. Ex, Vinnie, suddenly appears and persuades Foxy to flee north with him, into a howling blizzard. Can her stalwart friends rally in time to save her?

Imagine Me Gone

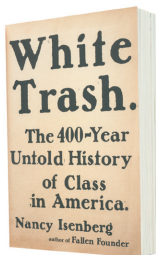
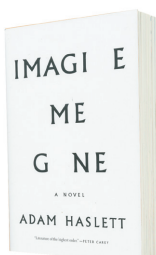
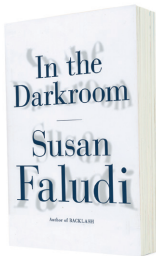
Adam Haslett
Little, Brown
\$26

In 1963, Margaret decides to marry fiancé John, despite his recent hospitalization for deep depression. Moving from London to New England, they have three children: Michael, Ceila, and Alec. The story is told through their eyes, always centering about Michael, who has inherited his father's illness. Whatever they do, wherever they are, they wait for Michael's next crisis. Eventually, John succumbs, removing himself from their, and his, lives. The reader, drawn in, treads lightly, also anticipating Michael's call or cry, demanding, needing, explaining in excruciating detail the logic of his latest obsession, until his own departure. Wearing, sometimes despairing, Haslett's novel shows in harrowing detail the power of love, of family, of the need to try to push the boundaries of love to the very end.

White Trash: The 400-Year Untold History of Class in America

Nancy Isenberg
Viking
\$28

Americans profess to be a classless society, but the opposite has been so, even before there was an America. From the very beginning, "disposable" people were shipped, through persuasion or less savory methods, to the new lands as human "fertilizer" to benefit those far above them on the social and economic scale. In addition to black chattel slaves, despised poor whites ("white trash" is an epithet of long standing) were acknowledged only for whatever labor they could provide. Isenberg covers the part of poor whites in the Civil War, in the eugenics movement in the 20th century, and in the class issues skirted in comedies like TV's *The Beverly Hillbillies* and reality shows including *Here Comes Honey Boo Boo* and *Duck Dynasty*. A sobering read. ■



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HOW TO MAKE AN ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT SUIT YOU

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BY SHANE LUECK

When friends or relatives come to visit from out of town, you could quickly make up a spare bedroom or (dare it be mentioned) the couch. Or, the addition of an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) to your property elevates the guest experience while also impacting the property value.

Eric Tollefson added an ADU to his home on Lake Harriet, but uses

the term “loft” to describe the space. “The open design, large number of windows, and vaulted ceiling really give it that feel,” he says. “I wanted a place for friends and family to visit comfortably and have their own space. It’s also where I’ll live while the main house is renovated in a couple of years (a process that will take a while); moving across the deck will be much easier than moving to something temporary.”

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“DESIGN ISN’T MY STRONG SUIT, SO I HAD A COUPLE GOOD FRIENDS WITH STRONG OPINIONS HELP ME THERE.”

Chris Strom, the owner of Christopher Strom Architects and developer of the “Second Suite” concept for Minneapolis neighborhoods, worked with the city to determine the feasibility of adding an ADU. “We had to achieve two variances because of the unusual and historic lot: one for the fact that the ADU was really close to the primary residence, and one because it was not located completely behind the primary residence.”

Tollefson’s first step was finding an architect who shared his vision of what the space could be; Strom was a perfect fit. “I learned about him through *Lavender*, after he wrote about how to build an accessory dwelling unit. He’s passionate about creating very useful spaces, has great experience with ADU’s and had a lot of excitement around the project,” Tollefson says. “Chris looked at the existing structure to understand options and proposed a number of layouts; after a good deal of discussion we landed on a plan. At that point, you need to find a builder you trust and figure out what fits within your budget (which you’ll likely change as you see all the things you can do).”

Uber Built was selected for Tollefson’s ADU due to their close attention to detail and smaller-company feel. “I never imagined how many decisions I’d have to make (pulls, doorstops, cooktops),” Tollefson recalls. “Design isn’t my strong suit, so I had a couple good friends with strong opinions help me there.”

Because of the small existing footprint of 380 square feet, Strom says the challenge was needing to think of functional spaces in terms of zones instead of rooms; space had to be shared. He says, “We wanted to choose high-quality fixtures that would stand the test of time but could also achieve efficiency in a small footprint. The 18-inch Bosch dishwasher is a case in point.”

Being detached from the house, the construction of an ADU isn’t very intrusive, but that doesn’t mean the process is hands-off. As Tollefson says, “Throughout the design and build you need to be in close contact with the architect and builder to make decisions and determine how to attack unforeseen issues. Clearly that would be a very different story if you’re working on something attached to your main residence.”

But homeowners beware; this is not like building a tricked-out garage (e.g. it costs more). Strom makes it clear: building an ADU is essentially building a small house; all the same tradespersons are required as in building a primary residence with an ideal lot being 50 feet wide or more.

But for Tollefson and many others, the benefits outweigh the costs. “ADUs (or the “Second Suite” concept) provide independent living opportunities for older family members, special needs persons, and rental opportunities,” Strom says. “The ADU concept is a net-positive for the city of Minneapolis because it increases density and widens the possibilities to multiple income levels while still retaining the essential residential character of existing neighborhoods.”

In terms of decorating, Tollefson treated the ADU like a completely dif-



Photo by Alyssa Lee Photography



Photo by Christopher Strom

ferent space than his home, wanting to maximize the light and views while keeping the interior sleek and minimal. “It’s amazing how large 375 square feet can feel when you’re smart about how you use the space!” Tollefson says. “The three buildings on the property (garage/loft, boathouse, and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26 ➔

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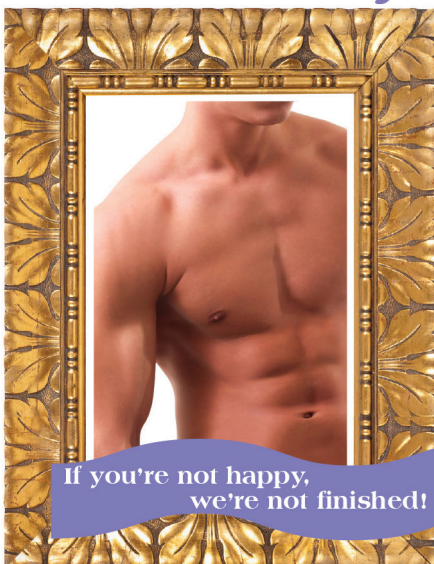
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main house) are all painted different, but complimentary, colors, so the whole look comes together as a sort of Scandinavian fishing village. I'm also planning on bringing this aesthetic into the main house when it's renovated; I'm excited to mix together that modern look with the bones of my hundred-year-old home."

With a combination of friends and family having already used his ADU, Tollefson has also already rented it a few times on Airbnb. Tracy Leigh Morgan, owner and design strategist behind A Modern Host says people set up short-term rentals, like Airbnb, in all kinds of spaces and with all kinds of goals. "You can really do anything from simply renting out a spare room in your home, all the way to creating one of these accessory dwelling units like Eric's. Or, if local regulations are with you, you can purchase investment properties for this exact purpose. Consider spare rooms, spaces like basements with private entrances, mother-in-law apartments, guest houses, cabins, unused garages/sheds (assuming they can be made all-weather comfortable, of course), or even your whole home or apartment, if allowed."

To begin, Morgan urges her clients to think and act as if they are starting a business, suggesting hosts get a clear picture of financial, tax, and legal risks and responsibilities. "You have to do a little soul-searching to make sure you have the temperament and time to host, the willingness to invest, and the desire to take it all pretty seriously," she says. "You want to get clear on the kind of host you want to be and the kind of guest you want to attract. Basically, what's your brand? Everything flows from there."

But don't be discouraged if it takes a while for money to start coming in. When you first hop on Airbnb, you're a bit of a no one, Morgan says. There's no way of promoting yourself within the app itself and ratings can only come from previous guests, creating a bit of a conundrum.

"I encourage clients to think about marketing and selling in other ways," Morgan shares. "Instagram offers a place to include imagery of the neighborhood, things to do, things you'll experience if you stay, and can build out the 'show and tell' of your rental space. A Facebook business page can hold all of those photos, as well as provide a place for non-guests to provide ratings on the quality of the space, location, and other things that would be informative to guests before booking. A flyer can go up in the local coffee shop. Think about other creative ways to network your space around and attract the guests you want."

The functional part of actually setting up a rental space on websites like Airbnb isn't difficult if you have some comfort navigating online. According to Morgan, it can be done in an hour, tops, but like with many things,



Photos by Alyssa Lee Photography

it's more about preparation. You'll need to make sure your listing, at the end of the day, is speaking to your ideal guest. Morgan says this means:

"YOU WANT TO GET CLEAR ON THE KIND OF HOST YOU WANT TO BE AND THE KIND OF GUEST YOU WANT TO ATTRACT."

Great photographs that not only show the space/layout effectively, but also communicate the "story" that you're trying to sell. You can include 11 in the listing, but Morgan recommends eight as a bare minimum.

Well-written, informative copy. You'll want to make sure your description of the space, the entirety of the property, the neighborhood, and any other relevant information is thoughtful and considered. Take the time to use proper grammar and punctuation so your listing reads well.

Pricing strategy, design of the space, and amenities that all make sense together. The design, décor and amenities are really everything.

When it comes to pricing, Morgan's advice is to do your homework and know your product. Your pricing should be a reflection of your neighborhood, the quality and design of your space, the amenities offered, and any other bits that make your space stand out. Who is your ideal guest and what does the competition look like?

"Airbnb has some great tools that can help you figure out where the market is, but that's really just another bit of information and should be considered as part of the whole, instead of a definitive answer," Mor-



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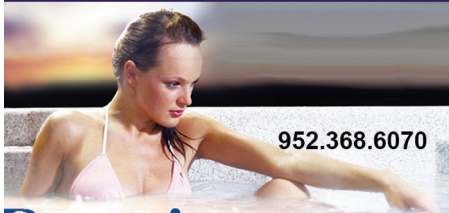
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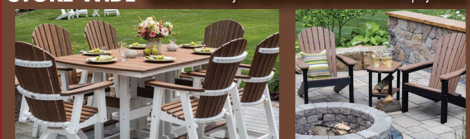
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“YOU DON’T NECESSARILY NEED TO DO A FULL-BLOWN RENOVATION OR REDESIGN, BUT BE REALISTIC. TO BE A HOTEL-ALTERNATIVE, YOU’LL LIKELY NEED SOME UPDATES.”

gan says. “Eric’s space was unique enough that calling it a ‘studio’ (aka, zero bedrooms) pushed the pricing in a direction that didn’t match up with the rest of the elements.”

Of course, when considering a small space like an ADU for rental purposes, the decor and fixtures you choose impact the overall feel. Morgan once again reminds homeowners to know their brand and ideal guest before starting to plan anything. With that in mind, set a budget that makes sense.

“Most spaces are not guest-ready just because they have a bed and the basics,” she says. “You don’t necessarily need to do a full-blown renovation or redesign, but be realistic. To be a hotel-alternative, you’ll likely need some updates.”

And invest wisely. Not every space needs top-of-the-line everything, so spend money on things that will return comfort for the guest, ease for you as the host, durability, functionality, and/or a great pop for your brand. Morgan says, “Eric’s space is a blend of high-end finishes and fittings, specialty store picks, IKEA and Target goodies, vintage/thrifted items, and custom-designed pieces. Creativity is key when making the budget fit the purpose.”

But that creativity has its limits. Morgan urges hosts to resist the urge to get “theme-y” in your design. “Sure, it’s fine to reference to a lake and outdoorsy aspect in your design if that’s where your rental is, but going overboard on nautical-themed everything will feel dated and overdone,” she says. “And don’t get overly caught up in what you prefer. Again, your voice and personality should come through in your rental space, but the purpose is to attract the ideal guest. Serve them first.”

Most of the furniture in Tollefson’s space does double duty. The pull-out sleeper sofa increases the capacity to host four people and Morgan worked with a local furniture craftsman to design the



Photos by Alyssa Lee Photography



coffee table to fit the space perfectly and to include the two smaller nesting tables that act as extra seating. Describing other decisions that went into the space, Morgan adds, “I chose all hypoallergenic bedding and pillows to eliminate any allergy concerns, and picked linen for the sheets and duvet covers since they are incredibly durable, love a high-heat wash, and feel extra luxe. Eric also added a dishwasher and washer and dryer making it an ideal place for extended stays, which opened up another potential revenue stream.”

With some friends and family guests under his belt, Tollefson would absolutely build his ADU again if he had the chance to go back and redo it. He says, “Everyone who has stayed so far loves it, it’s already had a great impact on the property value and it’ll be a source of passive income as long as I live here.” ■

For more information about Christopher Strom’s accessory dwelling units, visit www.secondsuite.org.

For more information about Tracy Morgan’s company, A Modern Host, see www.amodernhost.com.

For more information about the property, go to www.lakeharriettoft.com.



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Photo by Aparium Hotel Group

HOT NEW HOTELS

BY ANDY LIEN

In continuing our theme of “Home Away from Home” for this Winter Home & Garden Issue, I checked in with some of the hot new hotels popping up to find out what they’ve got going on. Whether you’re looking for accommodations to recommend to colleagues or guests who are coming to town, a place for a few nights of staycation for yourself, a hot new restaurant to try, or a location for a wedding or special event, consider these new properties in town.

HEWING HOTEL

300 N Washington Ave., Minneapolis

www.hewinghotel.com

Number of Rooms: 124

Date Open: November 2016

About the Hotel:

Hewing Hotel is taking shape in Minneapolis’ vibrant North Loop neighborhood, more commonly known as the Warehouse District, joining cultural stalwarts Traffic Zone Center for Visual Arts and Target Field, home to baseball’s Minnesota Twins. While Minneapolis presents a plethora of hospitality options, none tap into the local culture to create importance and signifi-

cance beyond the business traveler. Hewing will occupy the historic Jackson Building, originally built in 1897 at the gateway to the Warehouse District, immediately tying it to local culture like no other. Its destination restaurant, Tullibee, will compete head-to-head with Minneapolis’ best and the rooftop Social Club should quickly become a premier destination for the neighborhood’s progressive citizens and the hotel’s out-of-town guests.

What About Special Events?

The main level features The Andrews Ballroom, The Commissioner Boardroom, private dining rooms, lobby lounge areas, and a full-service restaurant with an open wood-burning grill and oven inspired by Minnesota’s woods and lakes.

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THE INTERCONTINENTAL SAINT PAUL RIVERFRONT



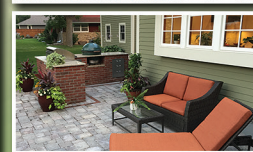
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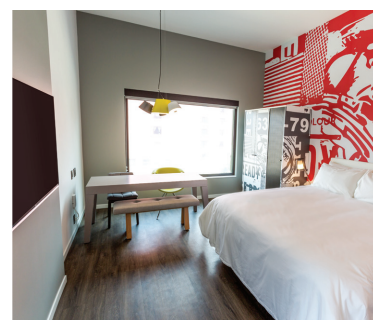
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RADISSON RED MINNEAPOLIS

Photos by Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group



How's the Food?

Hewing Hotel joins the esteemed culinary ranks of its North Loop neighbors, offering a dining destination helmed by *Food & Wine's* Best New Chef 2015, executive chef Grae Nonas. With a focus on hyperlocal sourcing and partnerships with regional farmers, freshwater fishermen, and top-quality area vendors, Tullibee pays tribute to Minnesota's culinary and cultural roots by drawing inspiration from its woods and lakes. The name "Tullibee" comes from one of the Minnesota's rarest fish found in the state's coldest deep northern lakes.

"I've always considered myself to be a Viking," said Nonas. "My family has Norwegian origins, much like this part of the country, and I feel right at home in Minneapolis."

Chef Nonas will embrace many of the practices that have rooted Minneapolis's culinary traditions, including foraging, butchery, and fermentation. He will also showcase a full range of game and offal as well as a rotating market-driven chalkboard of off-cuts. Nonas will look to create dishes driven by seasonality, hearty vegetables, and sharable fish and meat dishes served from the restaurant's wood-burning grill and oven.

What Makes the Hotel Unique?

Aparium Hotel Group is transforming the century-old brick and timber warehouse Jackson Building into a Nordic-inspired retreat in the spirit of Minnesota's northern woods and lakes. With the debut of the upscale, independent hotel, Aparium Hotel Group introduces Hewing as a cultural destination, complete with an onsite restaurant helmed by award-winning chef, as well as a unique rooftop experience.

Hewing Hotel's sixth-floor rooftop will welcome hotel guests and locals alike to a spectacular view of the downtown skyline that can be enjoyed throughout the year with a drink in hand. The space boasts a spa-pool designed for summer enjoyment and winter hot-tubbing as well as a 20-person cedar-wood sauna that is available throughout the year. Hotel guests and members of the rooftop Social Club, a one-of-a-kind amenity that provides special access to the rooftop, can enjoy the spa-pool, sauna experience, and special rooftop amenities during the day. Meanwhile, the public can take in the view at the extensive rooftop lounge complete with fire pits during the evening hours.

RADISSON RED MINNEAPOLIS

609 3rd St. S, Minneapolis

www.radissonred.com/minneapolis

Number of Rooms: 164 studios (guestrooms)

Date Open: November 2016

About the Hotel:

Radisson RED is a new hotel philosophy and lifestyle brand inspired by art, music, and fashion. RED connects with an ageless mindset and creates an experience that is localized, meaningful, and appealing to those who appreciate bold design, individuality, and sim-

plicity. It features art inspired by pop culture with touches of Scandinavian design highlighted by efficient, modern, yet functional furniture pieces. The hotel is designed to flow, with flexible public spaces that break down walls traditional hotels use to separate areas such as the lobby, restaurants, bars and meeting spaces.

Guests at RED are united by an appreciation for savvy design, energetic social spaces, technology that makes their lives easier, and customizable, unique experiences that connect them to their location. They want hotels that add to their travel experience, not just provide a place to sleep, and they want to feel connected to the community and to something bigger.

Radisson RED Minneapolis is located in the heart of downtown Minneapolis and is connected to the city via the Skyway system. It is a short walk to Target Center and Target Field and is just down the street from the new U.S. Bank Stadium. Because each RED hotel is connected to its location, Radisson RED Minneapolis boasts a large mural created by local artist Adam Turman featuring Loring Park's murder of crows with the St. Mary's Basilica and skyline in the background amongst additional pieces of art throughout the hotel.

What About Special Events?

The 1000-square-foot Events & Games Studio holds up to 74 people for games, cocktails, and food. The space is completely customizable depending on the group's needs. Pingpong tables and bean bag chairs fill the studio and when the space is not rented, it's a lounge area open to guests.

How's the Food?

RED's limited service restaurant and bar, OUIBar + KTCHN, is built around a simple, well-executed menu of local, sustainable, global street food and great local craft beer and coffee. Minneapolis culture comes to life through seasonal local produce and chef's specials. OUIBar + KTCHN serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and beyond that, offers 24-hour access to a "to-go" fridge for light bites and late-night options. Guests can order and pay for food at OUIBar + KTCHN via the RED app at any time of the day or night. Radisson RED Minneapolis is also dedicated to sustainable practices, so it offers environmentally sustainable to-go packaging and aims to be as close as possible to zero waste.

What Makes the Hotel Unique?

The flagship Radisson RED Minneapolis provides an experience unlike any other. The hotel's design builds flow between spaces, creating an integrated "social hive." It does not have a front desk, instead, staff mingle in the lobby to greet guests and assist with requests via tablet. Thanks to Baxter's Pet Policy, guests can bring their furry friends, free of charge.

RED chooses employees with bold style and individual personalities who bring the experience to life. Employees are encouraged to wear jeans and sneakers and can accessorize outfits. The brand trains

CONTINUED ON PAGE 34 ➔



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THE EMBASSY SUITES

staff in multiple roles so they can focus more on guests and less on the mechanics of a specific function across all areas of the hotel.

The Radisson RED experience is complemented by the RED app that simplifies the guest experience. In addition to providing easy check-in and keyless entry to rooms, the app allows guests the ability to order food, request services with an instant response via SMS, and connect to other guests staying in the hotel.

Guests also have access to 200 dual band MGB Wi-Fi (no buffering while streaming!) and can use their device to stream music and movies from Netflix or Spotify directly to guest room televisions.

THE EMBASSY SUITES BY HILTON MINNEAPOLIS DOWNTOWN

12 6th St. S, Minneapolis

www.embassysuites.com

Number of Rooms: 290

Date Opened: August 2016

About the Hotel:

Count on a unique stay at Embassy Suites by Hilton Minneapolis Downtown. Formerly the Plymouth Building, the all-suite hotel features modern amenities along with historic details like granite staircases and oversized windows. Directly linked to the Minneapolis Skyway System for quick access to offices, restaurants, shops, night-life and pro sports venues or take the Light Rail, just a block away, to St. Paul, MSP Airport, and the Mall of America.

What About Special Events?

From meetings, weddings, receptions, and reunions to traditional hotel conventions, you can count on planning professionals to help coordinate every aspect of your function. Event spaces with floor-to-ceiling windows with views of the city, boardrooms, atriums, and event spaces are all flexible enough to accommodate up to 800 people and to open yourself to the mindset of possibilities.

How's the Food?

Start your morning with free made-to-order breakfast, or pick up treats in the convenience shop. Join in any night at the complimentary Evening Reception, and enjoy cocktails at the stylish lobby bar. The hotel also has evening room service and is connected to Lyon's Pub and Rock Bottom lounge.

What Makes the Hotel Unique?

Listed on the National Trust for Historic Places, the Plymouth Building at the time it opened was the world's largest concrete reinforced building in the world. Now, the hotel offers a heated indoor pool, work out in the 2,000-square-foot fitness center, and refresh in the locker rooms.

AC HOTEL MINNEAPOLIS DOWNTOWN

401 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis

www.marriott.com/mspar

Number of Rooms: 245

Date Opened: October 2016

About the Hotel:

Located in the Hennepin Theatre District, guests enjoy thoughtful service and a modern mindset that elevates every travel experience. Each element of the hotel is carefully curated to provide a sophisticated retreat that's rich in style and substance. Contemporary rooms feature upscale amenities including Smart TVs that stream media from your own devices, along with mini-fridges and complimentary high-speed internet access.

What About Special Events?

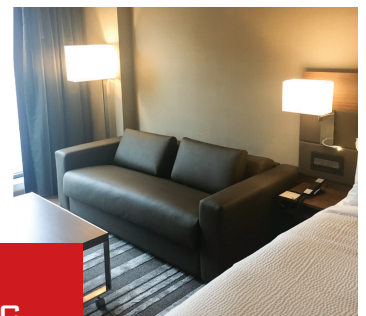
Venue space is available to host wedding rehearsal dinners and showers, and other special events.

How's the Food?

You'll enjoy European breakfast from the AC Kitchen along with tapas and evening drinks at the chic AC Lounge. AC Kitchen serves European-inspired breakfast each morning featuring assorted European and domestic cheeses, freshly baked croissants, artisan cured meats, a selection of yogurts and cereals, seasonal fruits, and sweet and savory tarts. At the AC Lounge, enjoy hand-crafted cocktails and European-inspired snacks, small plates, and sweets.

What Makes the Hotel Unique?

AC Hotels focus on the essentials of a beautiful stay and have created an experience unlike any other, replacing room service with the flexibility of a quick snack or evening tapas plates. Bartenders are true urban spirits who will share the unique buzz of the city and all it has to offer. It's an experience that has been designed to give you the essentials. ■



Photos by Jory Miller

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DOWNTOWN DOGS

A PUP'S HOME AWAY FROM HOME

BY SHANE LUECK

Ralph Bernstein was a banker. He came to Minnesota in 1996 to work for a big company and, by the time he left, he was running a multimillion dollar business for them.

"I had a pretty good and pretty typical life," he says. "I had a wife and two children, a house in the suburbs, two cars, friends, golf clubs, dog, etc. I was good at my job, and the company was happy to pay me pretty well, so off I went to work every day."

And then, on April 21, 2011, his whole world turned upside down. "That's the day that my wife, Stephanie, suffered a massive stroke," he remembers. "Five weeks later, she died. She was 49 years old. I will never know why it happened. All I know is that, in an instant, everything that I thought was important and everything that I thought my life was about, was shattered. And that's when the blinders came off."

He continues, "When I went back to work I soon saw just how much I had convinced myself that I was supposed to have a big corporate job. Then I realized how much I didn't want to do it any more. I started to think about what I would do if I weren't in the corporate world."

The best parts of Bernstein's days were when he dropped off his dog, Frannie, at Downtown Dogs in the morning and picked her up again in the evening. "It wasn't just seeing all of the other dogs (although I am 'dog stupid' as Stephanie used to say)," he jokes. "It was, as much, the tremendous positive energy and genuine warmth that greeted me every time that I opened the door. That's a rare thing and it was exactly what I needed when everything else in my life sucked!"

Thus, Bernstein began to think that maybe he would open his own dog daycare business. But, the more he thought about it, the more he realized that he didn't want just any dog daycare business, he wanted Downtown Dogs.

He says, "No other business has the amazing combination of people, energy, love, passion, knowledge, and skills that make Downtown Dogs the awesome place that it is. And so I approached the former owner with the idea of selling me Downtown Dogs. Two years, and many conversations later, we signed on the dotted lines and Downtown Dogs became my new home."

Photos by Hubert Bonnet

CONTINUED ON PAGE 38 ➔



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Offering both daycare and boarding for longer stays, Downtown Dogs is a dog's home away from home. Much like daycare for children, doggie daycare helps with socialization — in this case, with other dogs and with people. As well, daycare provides an outlet for high-energy dogs who need lots of activity during their day (sometimes more than their owners, or parents, as Bernstein calls them, can provide). In a place like Minnesota, where the climate doesn't always allow for a dog to run around outside, daycare provides a nice, warm alternative.

Longer term boarding provides peace of mind to a dog's parents that, when they have to travel without their dog, for business, vacation, or any other reason, their dog is being well cared for and looked after, in a safe environment, by people who take that responsibility very seriously.

"When I was in the corporate world, I traveled frequently and often out of the country," Bernstein says. "It was always easier to leave when I knew that Frannie was in good hands at Downtown Dogs."

Boarding isn't only for when parents are traveling. As Bernstein describes, family members come to visit who aren't always "dog people" and boarding provides a safe way for parents to accommodate that. And, of course, families grow. He says, "We have had more than a few customers who boarded their dogs with us for a few days while they were welcoming a new baby into their family."

For any new clients, Bernstein and the Downtown Dogs staff talk to them about their philosophy and approach to dog daycare. "Essentially, we think dogs should be dogs," Bernstein says. "We don't try to treat them like people (other than our Halloween costume contest) but we also know that they each have a unique personality. We work hard to understand those personalities and how they translate into play styles and temperament. Understanding those things is an important way that we avoid having a lot of altercations in our playrooms."

Every new client fills out a quick profile for their dog that Downtown Dogs staff then review with clients one-on-one. This takes a little more time, perhaps, than an online registration process but, invariably, Bernstein says they find out a key piece of information about the dog that they might not have otherwise. This is followed by a review of the dog's vaccination records to make sure that they are up to date on required vaccinations: rabies, distemper, and Bordetella.

"We give new and prospective clients a tour of the facility if they would like one," Bernstein says. "That doesn't happen as often as you might think; people can see our three playrooms from our reception area so, right away, they get a pretty good sense of what things are like here. We review our contract and go over basic health-related information. Then we send the parents on their way and let their dog settle in with their new playmates."

The three playrooms allow dogs to be separated by temperament and play style. "Each of our three playrooms — Florida, Vegas, and New York — has its own energy and personality," Bernstein shares. "We don't use a sorting hat like Hogwarts but, over the years, we've gotten pretty good at matching dogs and playrooms."

Don't the dogs fight? Sometimes. But, because of the way dogs are assigned to playrooms, and staff manages the energy in the rooms throughout the day, most fights stop before they ever start. When there is the occasional "dust up," Bernstein says his dog handlers are on it right away before there's a chance for anyone to really get hurt.

What if my dog gets sick while they are boarding? "We do whatever we can to take care of them," Bernstein assures. "Every client agrees up front that we can take any steps necessary to make sure that their dog is well cared for, up to and including taking the dog to the emergency vet. We've never had a client get upset with us for tak-



ing too good care of their dog."

As someone who has never sent his dog to daycare or boarded him while traveling, this writer is always cautious about letting others care for his pup, but Bernstein and his staff spend as much time with clients (both in person and on the phone) as they need for them to get comfortable with leaving their dog for a few hours or a boarding stay.

"We're all dog parents, too, so we know how scary it can be to leave your dog with someone you don't know," Bernstein confesses. "Our webcams help a

lot, too. Parents can peek in on their dogs whenever they want to."

Each new dog starts their experience at Downtown Dogs with an evaluation; they are set up in a starter pen next to one of the playrooms. From the starter pen, the dog can observe all of the action going on in the playroom before actually joining in.

"We like to call them 'courtside seats,'" Bernstein says. "One of our dog handlers keeps an eye and an ear on the dog to understand when they feel ready to be in the playroom. For many dogs that is pretty soon after arriving. For some, however, it may take longer. We never put a new dog on a play floor until they let us know that they are ready."

Once a new dog is in a playroom the dog handler or handlers assigned to that room keep an extra close watch on the dog to make sure that they are settling into their new environment and getting along with their playmates. If a dog still seems a little tentative or shy, the handlers may adjust their schedule, giving them more time to settle in before putting them in the playroom.

"And, of course, new puppies can spend several visits without their feet ever really touching the ground, our dog handlers love new puppies," Bernstein says. "There certainly aren't any specific breeds that don't work well for daycare and boarding. In fact, Downtown Dogs is known for the fact that we take all breeds, ages, and sizes of dogs, including all the 'bully' and 'giant' breeds. We love our Great Danes, pit bulls, and Newfies."

Certain dog personalities may not be as excited about daycare and boarding as others. According to Bernstein, just as with people, there are dogs that are happier being by themselves than they are being in a large group. The good news is that Downtown Dogs has an option for those dogs as well. In addition to "free play" daycare and boarding, Downtown Dogs offers individual daycare and boarding. Dogs who prefer this option are set up in a large, comfortable suite in the boarding room, given lots of blankets, a nice bed, and plenty of water.

"They are taken to one of our potty/exercise yards at least five times during the day so that they have plenty of opportunity to stretch their legs," Bernstein explains. "And, since there are always staff members in our boarding room, those dogs get plenty of human company throughout their day. Dogs who are very social, but also know how to respect other dogs' boundaries, do the very best. Picture a school playground, and all of the personalities and play styles you typically see, and you'll get a pretty good feel for what goes on in one of our playrooms."

Maybe it's not a trust issue with leaving your dog behind, but a bit of guilt that comes into play. Bernstein reassures dog parents not to feel guilty about leaving their dog, whether for the day or overnight. "That's exactly why places like Downtown Dogs exist and why we all love what we do," he says. "It's the best job ever. Every day we get to provide a service that our customers need and hang out with dogs all day long. It really doesn't get much better than that." ■

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OUR LAVENDER

Prediction from 1993 Concerning American Politics

"The relatives and former aids [sic] of congressional members together control approximately 20 percent of the seats in the House of Representatives and the Senate. Within this are many of the important positions of leadership, and the power of these clans is increasing in the last decades of the twentieth century as the importance of the political parties decline. For most tribes, kinship is the only one resource used by rising leaders, but in Washington kinship and marriage are fast becoming defining principles that determine who gets and who holds power. Once families and clans become as established and enduring as they now seem to be in American politics, they deviate from tribal politics and take a major step toward the familial politics of reigning aristocracies and royal dynasties."

– Jack Weatherford, Ph.D., Macalester College, St. Paul

Weatherford, Jack (1993). "Tribal Politics in Washington." PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review, Vol. 16 (1).

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For rainbow families, there are plenty of choices to transport parents, children, their pets, and a day's worth of grocery shopping. Of course, it would depend on how many people are being carted around and how much room is needed to lead their lives.

Like most families, we would think that a SUV would be our best bet. They are indeed right-sized and can seat up to eight people; however, most SUVs do not accommodate people that well... even when there are three rows of occupants and a lot of luggage. You could go to a very large SUV, which has its own drawbacks; for example, very low fuel economy and large size that lends to some creative parking situations.

As far as minivans are concerned, there is an image issue to address. Minivans are seen as bulky, dull, and uninspiring. They can also accommodate all sorts of rainbow families, even ones that are all adults.

We already explored some of the most important advances in the class: the Honda Odyssey with its HondaVac and the Kia Sedona with its high style and better accommodations for everyone. But we have been waiting for a minivan that can move the bar for the entire class completely. One that has style, accommodations, amenities, and is easy to drive without any of the guilt of other models before it.

At *Lavender*, we cover all vehicles that we think our community drives. Therefore, it is our pleasure to introduce to you the 2017 Chrysler Pacifica.

Yes, Chrysler. Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA), to be precise. The original producer of

the minivan. They invented the species: a smaller, more concentrated machine that is easy to drive like a car and has effectively put the end to the big full-sized station wagons. It can seat three rows of adults comfortably. It can also carry a 4' x 8' piece of plywood flat on the floor. It can carry more sheets of plywood without having them cut at the home improvement center.

This has been the formula since the fall of 1983. The minivans of Chrysler, Dodge, and Plymouth were on the forefront of family transportation. While Toyota, Honda, Nissan, and Kia introduced better minivans, FCA went back to the drawing board. The 2017 Pacifica was what they came up with.

Which brings up a slew of questions. We will start with two. One: has FCA effectively reinvented the minivan? And, two: will our rainbow families buy it?

It starts with a completely different look for the Pacifica. The name is different, although it was worn by a crossover vehicle that was developed during the Daimler days. There are people who think it should still be called the Town & Country, but when one goes through a huge change, why not change the name?

Exterior-wise, it is completely all changed. Every inch of this Chrysler is designed fusing brand tenets with a not-so-boxy shape. The front end may look like an oversized 200, but it helps to keep continuity across the brand. A few firsts pop up on the Pacifica: a new front quarter glass, a reverse slant far rear side glass, and horizontal taillights. This is not an evolution of the soon-to-be gone Dodge Grand

Caravan or Town & Country. This is an all-new design approach that was deemed necessary to compete against everyone else.

The Pacifica we tested was the Touring-L, right in the middle of the lineup. Wearing 17-inch wheels, the Pacifica may look a bit basic on the outside, but don't let its basic-ness fool you. An observant eye will tell you how much richness the Pacifica has overall: the accent lines and curves, the front end inspired by the 200, and every accent and detail surrounding its unique glass profile. FCA made sure to create a distinctive vehicle in the class they first created. This is truly a testament to the commitment to continue playing in the minivan segment three-plus decades on.

As dramatic as the outside, the cabin takes a huge leap forward in design and comfort. Our tester came with an eight-seat configuration, for which the second and third rows are folded into the floor through the Stow'n Go system. Behind the driver and front passenger, all seats folded in and offer a completely flat floor space to handle up to 140.5 cubic feet of stuff. As with the original minivan, the Pacifica can carry one of those 4' x 8 pieces of plywood without any obstruction on the floor.

All three rows offer adult-size accommodations. Access to the third row is very easy with a quick release of each second row seat and two power sliding doors for ease of entry and exit. Front row occupants are treated to comfortable and supportive bucket seats. Choosing the Touring-L trim gives all three rows nice leather upholstery with contrasting stitching. Stowage is abundant with small little cubbyholes down the

lower center tack and on the floor in-between the front seats, along with sliding storage places and so forth. The Pacifica is designed to take everything with you on any trips, including your work commute. And, there is a place for anything.

The Pacifica now has perhaps the best instrument panel in the minivan segment. It is as stylish as the Kia Sedona's, but it is anchored with excellent and concentrated controls. The transmission gets Chrysler's new knob control, while the electronic parking brake is a push button, all on the center stack. Capping the center stack is the new 8.4-inch UConnect Touch screen, offering access to UConnect Apps and audio playback options including music files, SiriusXM, and Bluetooth connectivity. Instrumentation include a customizable information screen in-between the speedometer and tachometer.

Above what was equipped in our tester, you can order other convenience options for the Pacifica depending on which trim level you choose. The Pacifica became the first minivan where you can operate the side sliding doors with your foot. This is great when you have bags of groceries in your hands. You can also get an on-board vacuum, as well; however, Chrysler puts their vacuum closer to the driver's side sliding door, instead of back by the tailgate.

And, then there's UConnect Theatre, the

next level is rear seat entertainment. They can connect game consoles, playback DVDs and BluRay discs and choose any of the onboard loaded games through two 10.1-inch high definition screens.

One thing that has not changed is the engine. FCA's Pentastar 3.6-liter V6 feels absolutely perfect underneath the Pacifica's hood. With 287 horsepower on tap, it runs smooth and very quick. Most minivans simply just drive along, but the Pacifica really wants to go. New to the Pacifica is the ZF-designed, FCA-produced nine-speed automatic transmission. Shifts are smooth across the power band. Power is sent down only to the front wheels. As for fuel economy, our Pacifica tester averaged 23.6 MPG.

Minivans were designed to provide a smooth, family-compliant ride. The Pacifica delivers with absorbent suspension all around to ensure that it rides without any negative feedback from the vehicle. Although handling is quite decent, do be careful through the cloverleaf exits and stay slow, because there will be lean and roll beyond the limits.

Cornering is excellent, even with an electric power rack-and-pinion steering set. The turning radius is very sharp for a 203.8-inch minivan making quick work of tight maneuvers. Steering action is good on-center with great

response from its thick-rimmed wheel. Brakes are excellent with solid pedal feel and strong stops in both normal and panic situations.

Blind spot monitoring, a reversing camera, and rear sensors and cross-traffic alert is what came with our Touring-L tester. Also available on the Pacifica is Lane Departure Warning, adaptive cruise control, and forward collision warning, among other active safety technologies.

The Pacifica lineup starts with the LX model for a base price of \$28,595. This Touring-L tester came with a sticker price of \$37,350. If you want everything in a Pacifica, a fully loaded Limited with all of the features listed in this review will set you back \$48,455.

The idea of continuing the legacy of the minivan was FCA's motivation to make this new one. Mission accomplished? The 2017 Chrysler Pacifica is a well-executed vehicle that fits right for rainbow families...and all other families, too. The Stow'n Go seating makes it versatile to accomplish the do-it-yourself jobs needed for the projects around the home and garden this winter. After the project is done, then you can take everyone out for a night on the town.

Right now, this is the best minivan in the market. The Pacifica leads the way with its innovations, technology and style. There is still magic in the minivan thanks to Chrysler, again! ■

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Authenticity

As my career morphs into professional speaking/training on diversity and inclusion, I'm meeting more and more people, sometimes several hundred in a week. Some of those folks have reminded me about how living authentically is core to the human condition.

One such reminder came following a recent training I gave in a Midwestern state, where I talked to the employees of various government entities. (In an effort to preserve someone's anonymity, I won't be more specific.)

During a self-labeling exercise with a group of 130 people ranging in age from late 20s to early 50s, I observed how no one in the room had identified as GLBT, which of course was absolutely fine. However, because my role is to prompt greater thinking about inclusivity, I offhandedly remarked, "It's just me saying, but statistically between 10 and 15 of you are somewhere on the GLBT spectrum."

Later, at the end of the training, I noticed a younger woman, maybe 30 years old, hanging back as I finished up with others who wanted to comment on the training. When it was finally just her and me, she approached with tears in her eyes.

"You know, I wanted to do that [self-identify as lesbian] so much," she said. "But I live and work in a small town and I'm so afraid of what would happen if people knew."

She then related that she struggled with living authentically even through college. "I really thought about killing myself and taking my secret to the grave," she shared.

Those words, which pierced my heart, made my eyes wet, too.

"Somehow, I got through it," she said. "Now I live with my partner and I'm very happy."

Wow. Her story took me back to a dark time in my life when the idea of being me, a woman named Ellie who can show up and just be, seemed so impossible.

Another reminder about authenticity came last month in Phoenix, as I sat in the front passenger seat of a Honda being driven by Nick, a twentysomething second-year law student. As he drove me to meet with some GLBT students from Arizona State University Law School, I asked what it was like to be "out" while trying to land a summer legal job in the red state of Arizona.

Nick related that a young lawyer at a large Phoenix law firm, whom he respected very much, advised that he hide his gayness. As Nick put it, "She said that there aren't many 'out' lawyers and my chances would be way better if a law firm interviewer thought I was straight." He added, "And yeah,

so I took her advice and removed any reference to my OUTLaw [law school GLBT affinity group] leadership role and anything else that would let the interviewer know that I'm gay. I also 'butched-up' for my interviews."

Four initial interviews later (with no call-backs) Nick concluded that his lack of authenticity showed through during the interviews. To his credit, he subsequently went back to listing gay-indicator information on his resume. "I figured that I wouldn't want to work at a place where I had to hide anyway," he said.

Good instincts, I thought.

It's also not uncommon for me to hear from a parent of someone GLBT, who'll talk about how they are accepting of their "out" child only to have other family members who are not. In one instance, the mother of a gay teenager broke down as she shared about how everyone on her side of the family had rejected her son.

All I could do was to offer a hug and remind that often, people come around. "Give them time," I said.

It's almost 2017 and nearly 50 years after the Stonewall riots, so why does it remain difficult for so many people to live without closets or compartments or the fear of disappointing a loved one? Even worse, why do we continue to lose people to depression, suicide, and addictions when they can't be their true selves sexually or gender-wise?

Despite all of the progress on GLBT rights, society continues to operate with the view that there's only one "normal," that of two birth gender-consistent heterosexuals marrying and producing genetic offspring. This idea of "normal" is reinforced through religion, xenophobia, and a host of other societal rules. Even more, it's often those in power (either by way of controlling money or organizations) who get to call the shots about what's "normal" and what isn't.

However, time will take care of everything. Younger folks are more accepting of diverse humans and less stringent about "normal." The judges (older persons less willing to adapt to the reality that one's sexuality and gender can't be "chosen") will die off.

Eventually, there won't be a "normal." Instead, there will just be "humans." Beautiful. ■

Ellen (Ellie) Krug is the author of Getting to Ellen: A Memoir about Love, Honesty and Gender Change (2013). She frequently speaks and trains on diversity and inclusion topics; visit www.humaninspirationworks.com where you can sign up for her newsletter. She welcomes your comments at ellenkrugwriter@gmail.com.

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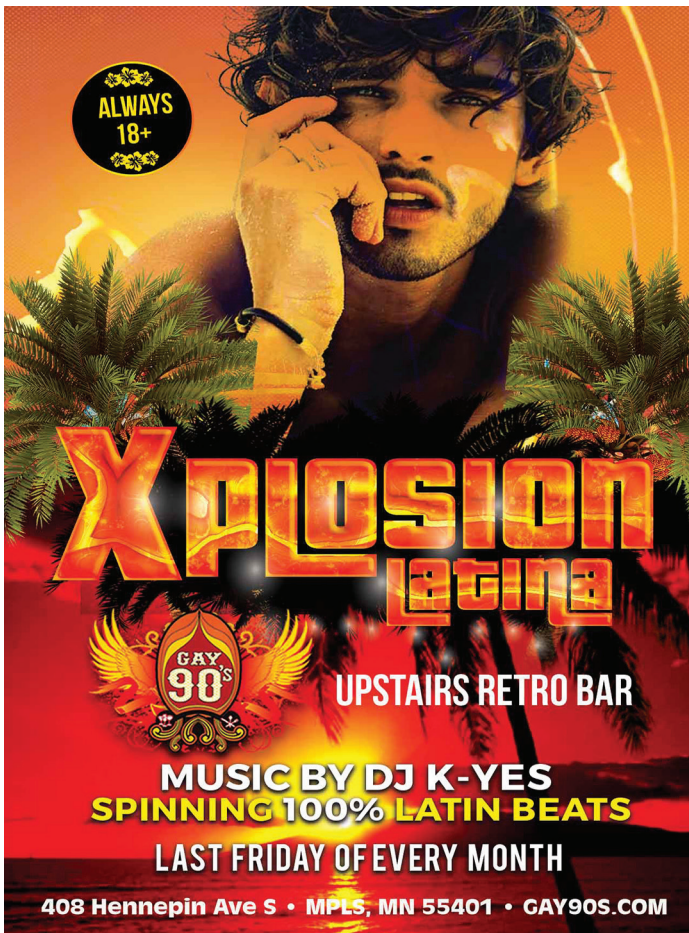
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Robot Girlfriend

I always thought it would be great to have a robot girlfriend. Finally, someone who will do what I want, when I want it, and won't give me any guff.

So, when Siri was invented by Apple, I was delighted! But Siri quickly put me on notice that she held me in the same low regard as my real life girlfriends. She routinely disagreed with my opinions, giving me alternate suggestions and flatly refusing to provide me with information I requested. Or she'd twist my clear instructions in order to manipulate me to satisfy her own malevolent whims.

It was Siri who directed me to a lesbian bar in a small Midwestern town that ultimately resulted in a misbegotten romance with a proprietress of a ferret farm. Five years later and I'm still finding clothing in the back of my closet coated in bad memories and weasel fur.

Recently, I made the mistake of buying Amazon's Echo for our house. The ad promised that it was a device "you can control with your own voice!" Since I am unable to control any carbon-based life form in my home with my voice (my girlfriend, her kids, my dogs) I snapped it up.

I had no idea what the Echo was designed to do, but I had some lofty expectations. I imagined it would follow me around the house, bleating in sympathy as I told it my woes, chasing off people and pets who tried to disturb me when I'm watching "my shows," and doing some light housework.

Instead, what arrived was a black monolith that stared at me dumbly for hours while I desperately tried to get it to communicate with me. When my girlfriend's 11-year-old arrived home, it instantly lit up in a blaze of color and announced that its name was Alexa and lived to serve him. He carried it off to his room and the happy couple hasn't been seen since.

In the corner of the room is a robot vacuum cleaner with the brand name Hazel. I had high hopes for this device, which looks like a grounded flying saucer. But other than regularly engaging in noisy battles with my French bulldog, this robot has done little but break my heart. I thought I would finally have an ally in the vacuuming cold war that has plagued my household from the day that my girlfriend and I moved in with each other. But it proved to be lazy and clumsy, taking days to charge its battery and then bumping repeatedly into the same wall until it caused itself irreversible brain damage.

Today, in a last ditch effort to find a robot life-partner, I searched "lesbian robot" on the internet. What appeared was both completely shocking and rather hopeful. Apparently, the concept of a lesbian robot is some type of fetish. The first couple pages of the search results were links to porn sites featuring lesbian robots.

My favorite of these was a 12-minute video titled "Programming a Lesbian Robot." This involved a comely blonde lady scientist in black lingerie programming a tall brunette robot in red lingerie to orgasm. Other robots were introduced throughout the story in order to complete this engineering feat.

Just as I got to the climax of the film, where a male scientist stumbles upon the lesbian robot turning the tables on the lady scientist, my girlfriend walked into the room.

"What are you doing?" she asked.

"Watching a science video on how to make a lesbian robot," I answered wistfully.

"Yeah, well forget about it. The last thing I need is another lesbian in this house not following my orders. Now turn off the computer and start the vacuum." ■



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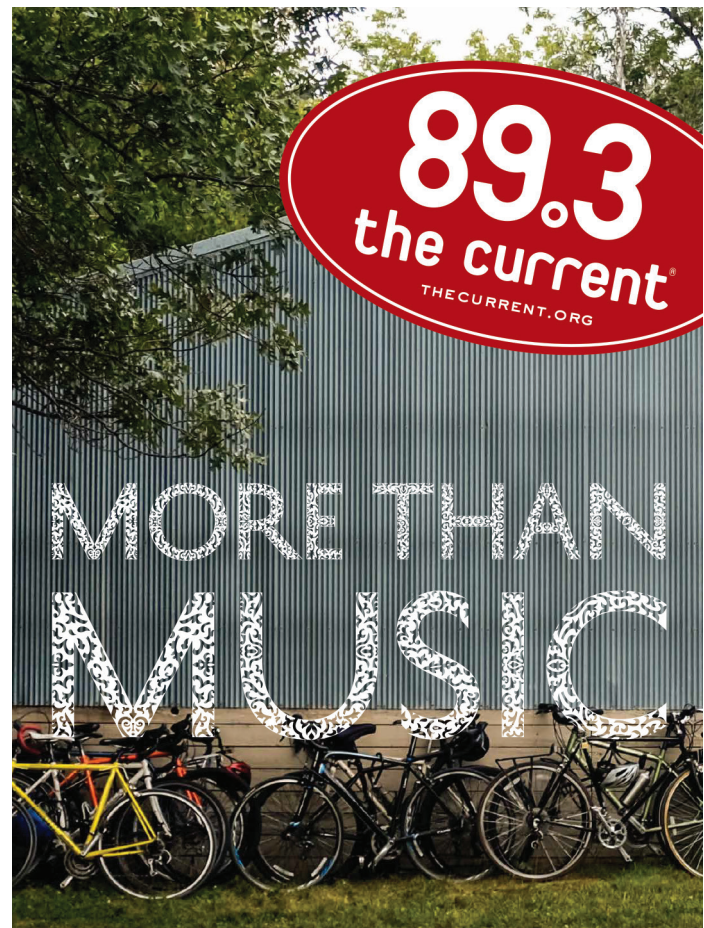
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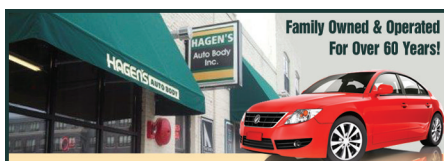
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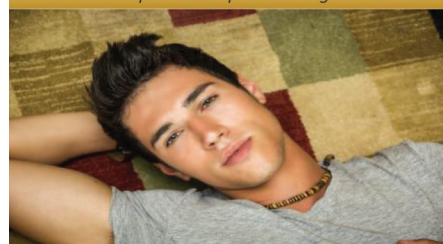
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Homosexual

I can remember in the seventh grade, hiding in the back of the library, flipping through the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. My back was to the wall, legs bent, to keep others from seeing the pages. Each section I read was followed by some bolded terms: “see related” it would say. It was a scavenger hunt of sorts and I was searching for an answer though I didn’t know the question.

From “men” to “romance” to “puberty” I was following a dizzying, delirious emotion more than any logical thought process. I just read what made me feel warm, flushed, excited, terrified, confused. I was looking for an echo of myself. Eventually, I found it. I remember my hands shaking and quickly shutting the book, slamming it back onto the shelf. But not before I read every word.

“Homosexual.”

The encyclopedia entry was clinical and written in very dry language. It didn’t describe anything in particular, certainly not the things I wanted to know. It didn’t tell me that the feelings I experienced were normal, shared, experienced, felt, celebrated, suffered, cherished. It didn’t tell me whether God would make me suffer or not. It didn’t tell me how to fall in love. It didn’t tell me that there were other men and women who felt the way I did. It didn’t tell me whether coming out would result in bullying or not. It didn’t tell me what cities or countries were safe and which ones weren’t. It didn’t predict that marriage equality would become a thing, that our closest friends and allies would all too quickly forget that it didn’t always used to be this easy. It didn’t tell me that I could be happy. It didn’t tell me what to do without a narrative of a wife and a white picket fence and six kids dressed for a morning Easter service. It didn’t tell me how to have sex, or what intimacy would look like. It didn’t explain that when I came out I would enter a world which would not be the same as the Catholic, parochial, St. Louis existence I was used to.

I did not know, and those one-and-a-half columns in an encyclopedia told me nothing.

My name is Patrick Boland. I am a current fourth-year medical student. I am also, as of this, my first written piece, a columnist for *Lavender* magazine.

I am also gay. To go from an encyclopedia entry and feeling utterly alone to becoming a part of the GLBT community — known, embraced even — is utterly incredible and these pages and words will come to explain that journey.

So why write these words at all? I think because living as a gay man

in Minneapolis over the last four years has changed me almost as much as medicine has. In both worlds, I have been forced to grapple with a people and a world and a set of values and a way of thinking entirely at odds with everything I had known before. I have been forced, in turn, to listen to the countless narratives of others. And in that listening, I’ve learned how much of our world is a thousand times more gray than any of us cares to admit.

Why does that gray scare us? I think because it would require us to recognize that maybe our lives aren’t right just because we’ve checked off the boxes. That maybe the story we told ourselves and tell ourselves at night about the life we want and currently have has nothing — nothing — to do with the possibilities of the world at large. Travel the world? I have a family. Pursue that big job? Not smart enough. Open relationship? I have morals. Monogamy? Unrealistic. Gays? Heathens. Straights? Unoriginal. Bisexual? As if. Transmen and women? I get the gay thing, but, queer? What a dumb word. Gay community? I mean, I sleep with men, but I don’t want to be a part of *all that*.

One of my favorite quotes, which my friends have heard again and again and again, comes from the novel *Gilead* by Marilynne Robinson. She’s writing in the first person from the perspective of a pastor in rural Iowa. At one point the pastor states that his favorite theologian used to imagine that all of us were actors on a stage and God was simply a member of the audience. That way, God’s response to us would be aesthetic rather than morally judgmental.

I always thought that was beautiful.

The reason I write is because I love stories. Stories are a medium more emotional than descriptive. You read the words silently, in the quiet of your mind, and as you read the words you hear them spoken in your own voice, your own inner voice. And I think in using your inner voice to say sentences and words you’d never agree with or never tell yourself in the real world, you have to empathize. You have to enter into that space.

So enter into my space. Take these words, and the words of this column going forward, as my encyclopedia entry for “Homosexual.” It wouldn’t get in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. It also won’t be dry, clinical language.

And when some young man or woman reads these words, maybe he won’t be shaking in the back of a library. Maybe, just maybe, he’ll be sitting outside on his front lawn, relaxed, reading beneath the open sky. ■

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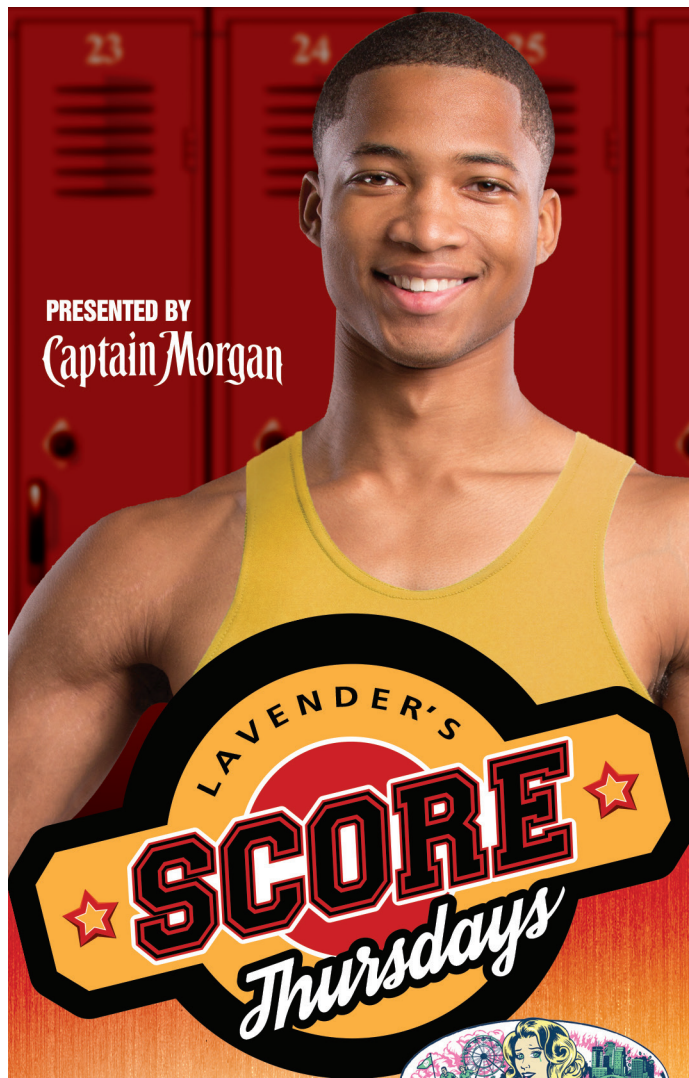
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